

REMARKS

At the time the present Office Action was mailed (May 1, 2006), claims 1-3, 6-10, 27, 29-36, 38-43 and 45-52 were pending in the above-captioned application. In this response, claim 8 has been amended solely to correct a typographical error, and claims 27, 29-36 and 38-42 have been cancelled. Accordingly, claims 1-3, 6-10, 43 and 45-52 are currently pending.

The status of the application in light of the May 1, 2006 Office Action is as follows:

(A) Claims 27, 29-36 and 38-42 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 under statutory double patenting;

(B) Claims 1 and 6 stand rejected as being unpatentable based on the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting; and

(C) Claims 8, 10, 43 and 45-52 are allowed, with claims 2, 3, 7 and 9 objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated to be allowable if rewritten to be in independent form.

A. Response to the Statutory Double Patenting Rejection

Claims 27, 29-36 and 38-42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 on the basis of statutory double patenting. Without commenting on or conceding the merits of this rejection, claims 27, 29-36 and 38-42 have been cancelled. Accordingly, the Section 101 rejection of these claims is now moot.

B. Response to the Obviousness-Type Double Patenting Rejection

Claims 1 and 6 were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting in light of claims 3 and 4 of U.S. Patent No. 6,747,734. Without commenting on conceding the merits of the double patenting rejection, and in an effort to

expedite prosecution of the current application, applicants submit a terminal disclaimer referencing U.S. Patent No. 6,747,734. Accordingly, the double patenting rejection of claims 1 and 6 should be withdrawn.

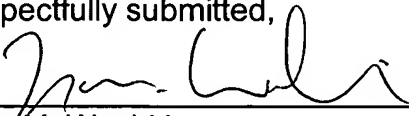
C. Response to the Indication of Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 8, 10, 43 and 45-52 were allowed. Of these claims, claim 8 has been amended solely to correct a typographical error. Claims 2, 3, 7 and 9 were objected to, but were indicated to be allowable if rewritten to be in independent form. These claims depend from claim 1, which, in light of the enclosed terminal disclaimer, should be allowed. Accordingly, claims 2, 3, 7 and 9 now depend from an allowable base claim and should be allowed.

D. Conclusion

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all the claims are now in condition for allowance. If the Examiner discovers any informalities or other matters that can be expediently handled by telephone, he is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney at (206) 359-3257.

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Respectfully submitted,

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